

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 12, 2018

Mr. Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

We are writing to request an extension of the public comment period for the EPA's modifications to the New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for methane emissions from oil and gas sources EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0483. There is additional information that we require in order to adequately comment on the rulemaking.

We request that the EPA provide the full 75 day comment period that the previous Administration gave for the draft NSPS and delay beginning the comment period until your agency provides written answers to the following:

- The EPA's own analysis shows that weakening the oil and gas standards will result in substantial additional methane and VOC pollution. How is this outcome consistent with the agency's statutory mandates and duty to protect public health?
- The EPA's own analysis appears to show that the standards the agency adopted in 2016 are even more cost effective than the EPA originally projected; why has the EPA nonetheless proposed to weaken those standards?
- The EPA's standards have been in place and working for more than two years. Has the EPA considered the compliance data that the agency has collected during that time? Would the agency make that data fully available so the public can transparently assess the benefits of the current program?

We are concerned about the precedent that the proposed changes to this rule sets for states. There is clear and compelling evidence that the current NSPS rulemaking is cost-effective, improves air quality, and increases public health. Moreover, several states already have standards that are more health protective than the EPA's proposed revisions. While these states would be permitted to implement their cost-effective rules under the proposed revisions, their neighbors would only be required to adhere to the weaker standards that your agency promulgated. The result would be more harmful pollution crossing state borders, making it more difficult and costly for states to adhere to the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

It has also been brought to our attention that the EPA is considering further modifying the NSPS methane standards and, in effect, removing the methane regulation entirely. The executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government have provided clear intent that the EPA has the

authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Most recently, the Senate voted to retain the BLM's authority to regulate methane emissions from the oil and gas sector on public lands. We urge you to adhere to the direction from the Senate and retain the EPA's 2016 NSPS rulemaking for methane emissions from the oil and gas sector in full.

As we continue to hear from our constituents and local and state officials on this matter, we will likely have additional comments for you in the future on this issue. If you or your staff have questions about this letter, your staff is encouraged to contact Candace Vahlsing of Senator Michael Bennet's office at Candace_Vahlsing@bennet.senate.gov. We also request that this letter be added to the docket under EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0483.

We appreciate your prompt attention to our requests and questions.

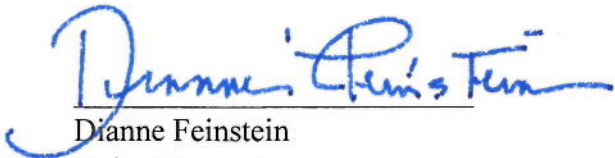
Sincerely,



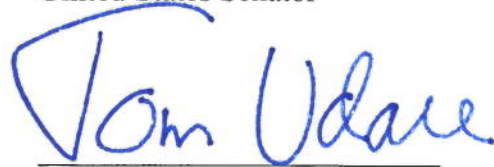
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
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Jeffrey A. Merkley
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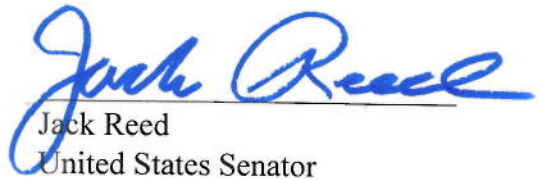


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator





Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



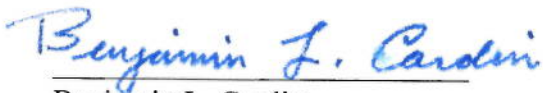
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



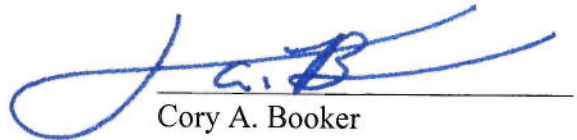
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



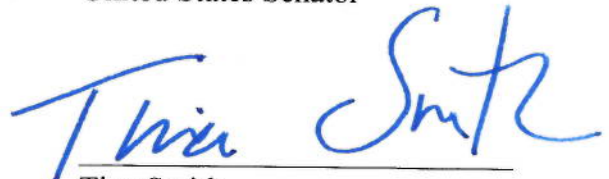
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



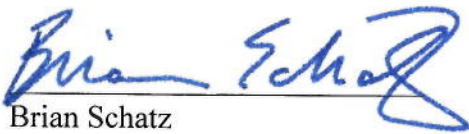
Chris Van Hollen
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Tammy Duckworth
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